



Elementary School Ancillary Services in Akureyri

Within the schools

Health Care:

The goal of school health care is to enable children to develop under the best possible mental, physical and social conditions. The school nurse administers first aid in case of serious accidents at school. He or she supports and counsels school staff in case of illness or accidents among students when on duty. The nurse is a part-time worker at the schools and is consequently not always on call. In case of minor accidents or injuries during school hours the school staff administers first aid.

Physical exams are conducted by the nurse according to the instructions of the surgeon general:

First grade students: Measuring of height, weight and vision. Lifestyle evaluation. If children have not already undergone the four-year examination they are vaccinated for tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough in consultation with the parents if they have not already received these vaccinations.

Second grade students: Measuring of height, weight and vision. Lifestyle evaluation.

Third grade students: Measuring of height, weight and vision. Lifestyle evaluation. Vaccinations for measles, German measles and the mumps. Girls exclusively receive Cervarix (An HPV-vaccination to prevent uterine cancer) twice over the winter.

Fourth grade students: Vaccinated for tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and polio.

Children in all grades are measured and examined as needed.

Parents/ guardians are responsible for the well-being and health of their children. Good cooperation and a flow of solid information are important in order for health care workers to do their job in the most effective manner possible. Parents are therefore encouraged to contact the school nurse if there are any changes in the life of the child that could effect his or her mental, physical or social well-being. Strict confidence is always observed concerning the affairs of specific students/families.



Medication at school

Instructions about medication at elementary schools from the surgeon general stipulate among other things that parents/guardians are mandated to convey to nurses the medicines that are supposed to be administered to their children at school and children/teens should never deliver the medicines themselves.

Lice

We wish to remind parents that in case of lice being discovered in a class the nurse or a staff member of the school sends an (electronic) notice to the students in the year in question reporting that lice have been discovered and parents are asked to inspect and comb their children's hair.

http://eldri.reykjavik.is/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-3901/6590_read-3405/6353_view-2305/

Student Counselor

The role of the student/employment counselor is to look after the welfare of all students. He is the trustee and advocate of the students.

Student counseling is conceived as a preventive service for all students of the school and meant to help students to create acceptable working conditions for themselves at school and at home and mark their own future path. The student and employment counselor therefore has to take initiative by approaching students who are in need of assistance but do not seek it out.

The role of the student and employment counselor is among other things:

- Counseling the student on his or her studies and choice of profession.
- Employment counseling and studying technique.
- Preventing students from dropping out of elementary and secondary school.
- Personal and social student support.
- Courses: Empowerment, social skills, emotional control, ADHD, dyslexia and courses on interaction between boys and girls.
- Interviews with new students.
- Conducting surveys on interests and discussing the findings with students.

Emphasis is placed on the counseling being available to all students and cases of trouble and discomfort need not already have arisen before the students attend an interview. The students themselves can request an interview with a student and employment counselor if they wish to discuss general matters or their hopes and aspirations in life with somebody. The student and employment counselor is bound by a vow of confidentiality, with the exception of the exemptions stipulated in the Child Protection Act 80/2002.

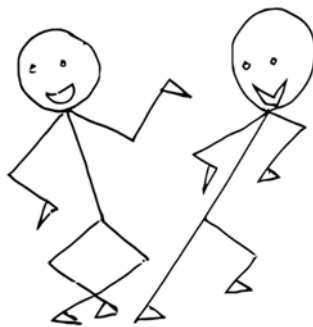


Student Protection Committee

The Student Protection Committee is active at all elementary schools in the municipality. The role of the Student Protection Committee is to coordinate the organization and implementation of health care services, student counseling and special services and assist principals in planning and implementing special student services. If a student is in need of special services because of disability, illness, social or emotional difficulties, school staff or parent can request a review by the Student Protection Committee. The committee consists of the principal, department heads, a student counselor and the school nurse. Furthermore, a social counselor (a representative of the Children's Protection Agency), a psychologist and a special education counselor from the Akureyri Educational Department attend the meetings.

Crisis counseling team – bullying team

All elementary schools have active crisis teams that react and offer support if serious conditions arise in the life of a student, e.g. if there is a family crisis in or he or she is the victim of bullying. At all schools screenings for bullying/communication problems are conducted and the teachers work in accordance with preventive strategies to try to keep such cases from arising. If there is an indication of a student being bullied there is a systematic reaction. There is work done the class as a whole, in addition to working with the victim, the perpetrator(s) and parents. It is important that parents support the teacher's endeavors and tell their children that bullying is never tolerated at school. Furthermore, it is important that parents notify their children's teacher immediately if the child is not feeling well or they suspect that bullying is taking place at school.



Support services outside of the school

All elementary schools can request specialized professional services for specific students from the Akureyri Department of Education, Glerárgata 26. The schools refer student cases to the Department of Education, with the parents' consent, on special reference forms. Furthermore, parents can seek assistance for their children directly. The reference forms are available at the schools or at the Department of Education.

Educational Department school services

The specialists at the Department of Education are psychologist or special education teachers. They offer counseling concerning a variety of problems faced by students, for example learning difficulties, developmental deviations, behavioral problems, bullying and emotional difficulties. Staff members evaluate the difficulties faced by a child with tests, interviews and investigations into the position of the child. Subsequently, solutions are suggested in cooperation with the school and the parents.

There is cooperation with other parties who offer specialized solutions, such as the special education department at Giljaskóli and Síðuskóli, Hlíðarskóli and Skólasmiðja. When needed, services and cooperation from other parties are sought, for example. the BUG (Children's and Teenage Psychiatric Ward) team of Akureyri Hospital, The Health Care Institution of North Iceland, the National Hospital's Psychiatric Unit for Children and Teenagers and the State Diagnostic and Counseling Centre. Furthermore, school services staff members refer student cases to the appropriate institution in cooperation with the parents.

Helga Vilhjálmsdóttir psychologist is Director of School Services. Email: helgav@akureyri.is

Speech therapists

If children need the assistance of a speech therapist, for example because of difficulties pronouncing certain sounds or language developmental issues, the teachers forward reference form with the signature and consent of the parents to the School Services Educational Department. From there the reference is forwarded to the speech therapist. Speech therapy sessions are usually conducted at the speech therapists' clinics and the children attend them with their parents after school hours. If circumstances at school permit, the children are escorted to a speech therapist from the school or a speech therapist visits the school.

Educational counselor for students with Icelandic as a second language

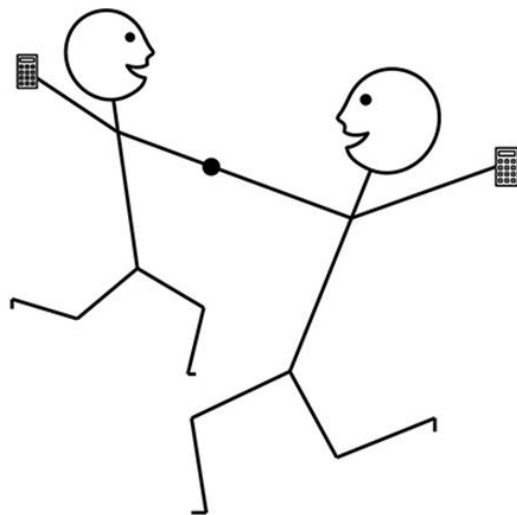
Students who do not speak Icelandic as a native language have the right to assistance with Icelandic as a second language at school. The assistance is conducted in a classroom or in a small group outside the class. The educational counselor from the Department of Education assists teachers, students and parents, esp. on first arrival at the school and during the first weeks in new conditions. The educational counselor conducts interviews with parents as needed, according to wishes and circumstances and counsels the teachers and parents. The educational counselor oversees an education and information website for teachers and parents can also make use of the website: <http://erlendir.akmennt.is>

Helga Hauksdóttir is the educational counselor. Email: helgah@akureyri.is

PMTO parenting skills

PMTO is a thoroughly tested treatment solution that reduces behavioral problems with children and teens according to comprehensive research. The solution was developed at the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) in the United States and adjusted to Icelandic circumstances for treatment and preventive purposes. As parents are their children's most important instructors, emphasis is placed on thorough collaboration with them as they receive assistance with adopting new parenting skills. Certain basic factors are concentrated on in order to encourage positive behavior in the child and reduce a sense of unhappiness and behavioral problems. Emphasis is placed on clear instructions, emotional control, communication tools and a rapport between home and school. Parents are taught, among other things to use systematic encouragement, to set limits, to make use of systematic supervision, conflict resolution and sharing positive quality time with their children. It is possible to apply for a **PMTO parenting skills course, eight sessions, 2 1/2 hours each**. This is suitable for the parents of younger children with relatively minor problems. If the child's behavioral problems are acute, it is possible to apply for **PMTO individual** therapy which is conducted in the form of interviews at the Educational Department over a period of up to twenty weeks. Another option is PMTO-PTIC group therapy where the group meets on a weekly basis, homework assignments are completed and telephone support is available between sessions. Specially trained treatment professionals, psychologists or social counselors conduct the treatment program and courses. Parents can apply for PMTO services on special forms: *Reference for specialized nursery and elementary school services* and the forms should be handed in at the Akureyri Educational Department, to the child's head teacher or school administrators.

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Elementary School Special Department

Síðuskóli Special Department for Autistic Students

Síðuskóli has a special department for autistic students. Students domiciled in Akureyri who have been diagnosed as autistic by accredited professionals have the right to pursue their studies at the special department. Furthermore, students need to have been diagnosed with other deviations, such as mental retardation and/or behavioral problems. At the special department emphasis is placed on individualized instruction which takes into account the needs and position of the student, the wishes of the parents and the school curriculum. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on accommodating disabled and non-disabled students together and an effective and purposeful collaboration with parents. Department staff serve in an advisory capacity towards autistic children at other elementary schools in Akureyri.

Giljaskóli Special Department for Multi-handicapped Children

Giljaskóli has a special department for multi-handicapped children. The students need specialized individualized instruction and training. Their handicaps often go hand-in-hand with sensory difficulties as well as difficulties with reasoning, communication, motor skills, self-sufficiency, social communication and daily chores. The students need assistance with all daily activities, care and constant supervision. The curriculum, teaching materials and equipment are designed for the individual needs of every student.

Development-based studies: Emphasis is placed on sensory, motor communication, cognitive social and emotional development.

Skill-based studies: Emphasis is placed on enhancing the students' coping skills in daily life, such as self-sufficiency, simple jobs and hobbies.

Experience-based studies: Emphasis is placed on enhancing the students' world of experience so that they can form a clear picture of the environment in which they live and experience it in a meaningful way.

The special department has an advisory role towards teachers, parents and others associated with this student group.

Hlíðarskóli

Hlíðarskóli offers a special solution within the Akureyri elementary school system for students faced with problems that make it difficult for them to flourish, experience well-being and pursue their studies effectively in a general elementary school. Among other hurdles are social and emotional problems, considerable behavioral and adjustment problems, communication difficulties, various problems related to the autism spectrum, special learning difficulties and various kinds of disabilities.

Generally, admission to the school is conceived as a temporary solution when all attempts have been exhausted to serve the needs of the student at his or her local school and with special services at the school and a PMTO counselor. It is common for students to spend 1-3 years at Hlíðarskóli, but in some instances students need to attend the school over an even longer period. Students are given a chance to learn and study in the most varied manner possible so that their various intellectual facets and strengths can be exploited fully. The teaching is therefore based on variety and takes into account the different capacities, abilities and fields of interest of each individual.

Parent participation is a very important factor in school activities and a great emphasis is placed on supporting and sustaining parents in the upbringing of their children.

